

Message Text

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DEPT PASS HUD FOR DE HANCOCK

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TGS: TGEN, UR, US

SUBJECT: SECOND MEETING OF HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION JCM: WRAP-UP
(10.00)

REF: MOSCOW 13642

1. VISIT OF U.S. DELEGATION, HEADED BY HUD SECRETARY HARRIS, TO SECOND MEETING OF HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION JCM, SEPTEMBER 18-25 PROCEEDED VERY WELL BOTH IN SUBSTANCE AND ATMOSPHERICS. DESPITE SOME INITIAL FOOT DRAGGING, THE SOVIETS ACCEPTED ALL U.S. POSITIONS ON ORGANIZATION OF WG'S AND WORK PROGRAMS FOR THE COMING YEAR. DURING PRE-JCM DISCUSSIONS MOSCOW AT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY LEVEL. THE ONLY POINT OF SUBSTANTIVE DISAGREEMENT, A MINOR ONE INDEED, THAT AROSE DURING THE JCM DISCUSSIONS CONCERNED THE INABILITY OF THE U.S. SIDE TO PROVIDE MEDICAL INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR ONE SOVIET WG (10.01) IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS MATTER WAS ALSO RESOLVED TO U.S. SATISFACTION.

2. SOVIET CO-CHAIRMAN NOVIKOV AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

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FOMIN BOTH EXPRESSED STRONG SUPPORT FOR CONTINUATION AND STRENGTHENING OF ACTIVITIES UNDER THE AGREEMENT. IN FORMAL STATEMENTS DURING JCM MEETING BOTH NOTED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN FURTHER ACTIVATION OF WORK ON CONSTRUCTION IN SEISMIC ZONES AND INDUSTRIALIZED BUILDING SYSTEMS. THE U.S. SIDE UNDERLINED INTEREST IN SEISMIC RESEARCH, PARTICULARLY INTERNATIONAL

COOPERATION ON MONITORING, AND CONSTRUCTION IN COLD WEATHER ZONES DURING JCM. THE ONLY HINT OF CRITICISM BY THE SOVIETS DURING THE JCM WAS FOMIN'S REMARK THAT HIS SIDE DESIRED TO INSURE THAT "MEETINGS BE HELD AT THEIR AGREED TIME" - WHICH WE TAKE AS A MILD REFERENCE TO POSTPONEMENT OF THE JCM LAST YEAR BY THE U.S.

3. IN AN AGREEMENT PLAGUED BY ADMINISTRATIVE LAPSES ON THE SOVIET SIDE, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT AGREEMENT WAS OBTAINED DURING THE JCM THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD EXCHANGE ITINERARIES SIX WEEKS IN ADVANCE OF PROPOSED WG VISITS. DURING INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS, THE SOVIETS READILY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN WEAK UNTIL NOW AND GAVE ASSURANCES THAT PERFORMANCE WILL IMPROVE.

4. THE SOVIETS WERE VERY STRONG ON ATMOSPHERICS DURING THE JCM AND SUBSEQUENT STUDY TOUR FOR MRS. HARRIS AND MEMBERS OF HER DELEGATION TO TASHKENT AND SAMARKAND. SECRETARY HARRIS' MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER KOSYGIN SEPTEMBER 19 (REPORTED REFTEL) WAS SIGNAL OF THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SOVIET INTEREST AND SUPPORT FOR THE AGREEMENT. HOSPITALITY PROVIDED BY NOVIKOV AND FOMIN WAS EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD, EVEN BY SOVIET STANDARDS, AS WAS RECEPTION ACCORDED SECRETARY HARRIS AND HER DELEGATION BY M.D. MUKHARTOV, DEPUTY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CHAIRMAN, COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE UZBEK REPUBLIC.

5. MEDIA REPORTING OF THE JCM WAS EXTENSIVE AND POSITIVE, WITH SECRETARY HARRIS RECEIVING FRONT PAGE COVERAGE IN PRAVDA ON THE KOSYGIN MEEING, AND THE NATIONAL TELEVISION NEWS PROGRAM "VREMYA" COVERING THE OPENING OF THE JCM AND HER PRE-DEPARTURE INTERVIEW GIVEN SEPTEMBER 25.

6. COMMENT: THE SECOND SESSION OF THE JCM GAVE A DIRECT AND URGENTLY NEEDED BOOST TO THE HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION AGREEMENT. THE LEADERSHIP PROVIDED BY SECRETARY HARRIS, THOROUGH PREPARATION AT THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY LEVEL, AND SOVIET COOPERATION THROUGHTOUT COMBINED TO MAKE THE JCM AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS. SECRETARY HARRIS AND HER DELEGATION RESPONDED WARMLY TO SOVIET FORTHRIGHTNESS AND HOSPITALITY, BUT MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE U.S. EXPECTS BETTER SOVIET ADMINISTRATION AND MORE TANGIBLE RESULTS FROM COOPERATION IN THE FUTURE. WHILE LARGE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND U.S.S.R. ON ORGANIZATION AND APPROACH TO CONSTRUCTION AND HOUSING PROBLEMS WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO LIMIT

ACTIVITIES UNDER THE AGREEMENT, A NUMBER OF SOLID
AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND COMPETENCE HAVE BEEN
IDENTIFIED. THE JCM SUCCESS HAS REVIVED PROSPECTS FOR
RENEWAL OF AGREEMENT IN 1979. HOWEVER, CAREFUL MONITORING
IS NECESSARY TO DETERMINE HOW SOVIET PERFORMANCE
MATCHES THE PROMISES MADE. END COMMENT.

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